

Strategies to Projects: Building a Common Understanding 2003 LE/SRFB Workshop

Breakout #2

The following thematic descriptions resulted from an analysis of the breakout #2 worksheets. Below each theme are 2-3 examples of representative comments from the worksheets.

1. What constraints and challenges exist at the watershed level for developing the type of specific and focused core strategy suggested at this workshop?
- There is a need to fill technical data gaps before being able to prioritize into narrow geographical areas; some LE's request technical assistance to fill these gaps.
 - *No wide-scale EDT (only on Chinook in one watershed)*
 - *Lack of data/inconsistencies that prevent specificity*
 - *Data gaps/standards → \$ limitations*
 - Building community support is seen as an important and legitimate aspect of LE efforts—strategies and SRFB evaluation processes should reflect this. Socio-political criteria should be clear and considered in both strategies and project evaluations.
 - *Prioritization based on biology could alienate some stakeholders (e.g. small cities in multiple watershed WRIAs). What is ability to target lower priority areas to retain/build support?*
 - *Developing community stakeholders and determining willingness or support on a site-by-site basis throughout the whole basin.*
 - *Government brings incentives → money and technical assistance to approach landowners inclusively!*
 - There is value to allowing projects across a broader geographic area than suggested by the sample core strategy.
 - *Getting too specific may make the strategy too rigid and does not take a holistic approach → maybe missing the big picture. There is still a lot of uncertainty in the science so it is better to keep looking at the bigger recovery picture and refine as more is learned.*
 - *Further you narrow, the harder to provide scientific data to support. Data is not consistent in all reaches.*
 - *Some LE's require looking at entire watershed for protection of listed stocks → this makes it difficult to prioritize.*
 - *LE with multiple watersheds requires setting priorities both within and across the region.*
 - Time, effort and resource constraints make it difficult to refine/change strategies.
 - *Some LE's do not have enough manpower to do the work; not enough technical people in rural LE areas to develop the strategy → small staff and already overworked technical staff.*

- *Manpower → enough people (tech) to develop type of strategy discussed here. How to get everyone to buy into a 70-80 page document; in some areas getting buy-in for a strategy has taken 10 years!*
2. What do you see as the benefits and importance of attempting to prioritize the LE strategies as described in the sample?
- The number one benefit for further prioritizing LE strategies identified by workshop participants is that doing so may lead to better, higher priority projects and will target project opportunities in a strategic manner.
 - *Make strategy similar to an “investment plan” which is more attractive to certain factions of LE (e.g. county commissioners, politicians).*
 - *Makes local process more strategic and efficient → precision in identifying what is important.*
 - *Helps target activities and project sponsors.*
 - Another benefit is that it will help LE’s communicate and market project priorities to community stakeholders and also to the Tech Panel and SRFB.
 - *Will help to integrate and improve communication among local committees, state Tech Panel and SRFB/IAC.*
 - *Transparency brings trust → community decision-makers.*
 - *Helps communicate to broader audience → the public.*
 - A focused strategy is more understandable making it easier to get support and funding.
 - *Political tool for consistency, \$\$\$, LEG support.*
 - *Helps sponsors focus on scope and quality of projects by working with LE and tech/citizen folks.*
3. How should LE’s address areas where there is strong community support but not high biological priority?
- Incorporate ideas and rationale for building community/stakeholder support for salmon recovery.
 - *Use visible project areas, low cost, to educate public on salmon and restoration benefits.*
 - *If funding source does not fund low benefit projects, then why invest time and effort into submitting these projects?*
 - Ensure that community stakeholders participate in developing the strategy priorities.
 - *Include broad base of stakeholders as strategy is developed, state why and build trust between parties.*
 - *Need to be specific when demonstrating community importance.*
 - Strategies should describe the biological and socio-political criteria for project solicitation and selection and describe the priority/balance between the two.
 - *Be clear that biology is priority in strategy.*

- *Have defined socio-economic criteria.*
 - *Project should have a t least medium benefit/certainty to be considered (minimum threshold) by LE.*
4. What do LE's need (in terms of SRFB policies, technical assistance or resources other than money) to support moving toward a more strategic (versus opportunistic) approach to soliciting and prioritizing projects? Please be specific.
- LE's want the SRFB to clarify its expectations and provide more guidance on the following:
 - Tech Panel and LE interaction.
 - Clear definition and agreement of terms.
 - Timing of the next, and subsequent, grant cycles.
 - Clarify the Technical Panel, IAC SRFB staff and SRFB roles.
 - *Need more info on how the SRFB thinks/evaluates projects → perhaps a workshop specific to this point: who is the SRFB? What do they think?*
 - *SRFB does need to lay out what it is they want to see.*
 - *SRFB very clear → it needs to look this way; recognize this is just a piece of your overall strategy; that it is to focus SRFB projects.*
 - Define terms:
 - Protect
 - Enhancement
 - Restoration
 - Provide guidance for writing strategies, including clarity of understanding the funding priorities (clear and consistent criteria).
 - *Clear criteria from SRFB on project funding*
 - *Community support*
 - *Ecological value*
 - *In writing*
 - *Not rapidly changing*
 - *Consistent criteria for TP review on everything (strategies and projects). Need to avoid incremental TP member policy development.*
 - Some participants (about half) want time to refine their strategies before the next grant cycle.
 - *Time to refine LE strategy before 5th grant cycle.*
 - *More time to develop strategy.*
 - LE's desire more one-on-one interaction with Tech Panel for strategy guidance, and project selection/review guidance.
 - *Have TP present when revising strategies.*
 - *State TP to work individually with each LE to design an appropriate strategy. Otherwise, LE is just bringing strategies to TP asking again and again, "Is this right? Is this what you meant?"*

- LE's want assistance communicating with and persuading project sponsors and community stakeholders about matching projects to the strategy's priorities.
 - *Tactics to dissuade sponsor from proposing projects that really don't have much of a chance of funding success.*
 - *Develop a communication strategy to generate support for strategy; a simple stepped process identifying knowledge of watershed.*
5. What edits/changes would you suggest to the sample strategy outline provided in this workshop?
- Requests for assistance.
 - *A stronger socio-economic emphasis with project review.*
 - *Retain ability to address limiting factors by taking advantage of community support and opportunities.*
 - *Disconnect between guidance from NOAA, UW and PSNRP strategic planning guidance and SRFB guidance.*
 - *Maybe just ask for a specific, concise SRFB strategy each year, not our whole complicated strategies.*
 - *Portfolio vs. EDT; EDT vs. VSP → Tell us which one!!!*
 - Clarifying questions.
 - *Day 2 handout, page 1, "Potential Benefits of Focused Strategies" → What does bullet 3 mean? → Not much support for certification – LE didn't think they were ready, others thought this "dangerous"; who would certify? How?*
 - *What about addressing habitat processes? Will this approach work? Yes, says one, actions to address processes can fit in the table of actions. But how would you fit a suite of related actions into a table?*
 - *What does incorporating public support into your strategy mean? How would the TP evaluate these things?*
 - *Will SRFB honor state-certified recovery plans?*
 - Additions to the sample strategy outline.
 - *Opportunities can fit into your strategic approach too. Articulate how you will use opportunities → critical anytime you work with local governments; opportunistic vs. strategic is an artificial dichotomy; point out the benefits of being flexible to take advantage of opportunities (it's a good thing!).*
 - *Identify where the technical knowledge exists that will support the highest priority projects.*
6. LE Strategies can be used in all the following ways. Rank-order the various uses to which LE strategies can be put.

Most groups either did not answer, or ranked top 3-4. Only two groups ranked all of the options. One group felt that strategy uses are up to the individual LE's to decide; that it should not be part of a collective process as asked for in this question.

7. What guidance or direction would be helpful from the SRFB regarding how LE strategies should be used for the SRFB funding process? For example, should the SRFB define their position regarding the “preference for listed species”? Other types of direction? Please be specific.

Most of the responses are similar to those in question #4, and are incorporated into the summary of that question. Again, the summary of issues to be addressed include: clear defined terms, strategic guidance on strategy development, clarity on roles and expectations, transparency in the process, clear criteria for evaluation, clarity on priority for listed species or all species, and an understanding of the available money up front of the process.